[120]The sale was held in the rooms of King & Lochee, London auctioneers, on 23, 24 and 25 May 1805. Many of the leading British naturalists and collectors were in attendance. A copy of *A catalogue of the most capital assemblage of insects probably ever offered to public sale* ([London,] 1805), annotated with prices and names of purchasers, is preserved in the Library, Entomological Department, BM(NH). The total amount realized was £903/13/6.

Notes and Observations

CURATE'S OVUM. – Why do we entomologists persist in using the word *ova* when we mean *eggs* or, worse, that horrible word *ovipositing* instead of *egg-laying*? I can think of no other subject or branch of science that does so; birds do not lay ova and it would be a very pedantic person indeed who orders a fried ovum for his breakfast. Perhaps it is to be consistent with *larva* and *pupa* but these words are used for special forms that are peculiar to insects and their English equivalents are cumbersome and not precise; except in matters of detail there is nothing special about an insect's egg so why do we have to call it by a fancy name?

Let's face it: it is a legacy of a bogus intellectual snobbery which is unworthy of today's entomologists. It may, just *may*, be necessary for some special reason to refer to ovum or ova but the occasions will be rare; at all other times we should eschew outmoded jargon and say what we mean in plain English. – Lt. Col. W. A.C. CARTER, Briarfields, 4 Sandels Way, Beaconsfield, Bucks.

BASE MEDIUM FOR SPECIMENS TO BE FREEZE-DRIED. – With reference to the item by Colin W. Plant in Vol. 96 Nos. 5/6 I also have found that Plastazote deforms when in an Edwards EF2 freezer-drier. A satisfactory material is Kappa Board. This is a light weight display board consisting of a rigid foam sandwiched between white card surfaces, it is available in 3.5, 5, 10 and 15mm thicknesses. I usually use the 15mm. Satisfactory setting boards for micros can be produced by using a scalpel to make two cuts through the card of one side, the width of the required groove apart, and then with care peeling of the strip of card from the foam. The foam in the resulting groove can then be cut out to the depth required or, more simply, depressed using the reverse end of forceps. – D. H. HALL-SMITH, Assistant Keeper, Biology, Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries & Records Service, Leicester LE1 6TD.

A FIRST YEAR IN YORKSHIRE. – My first surprise was the relative abundance of the Juniper Carpet (*Thera juniperata* L.) at the kitchen window of my York house. A total of 22 were seen at light with 14 on one evening (20th October 1982). Whilst cutting the grass on September 29th a pale geometer flitted across the lawn at dusk. A back hander to the ground revealed a Vestal (*Rhodometra sacraria* L.). The weather consisted of strong southerly gales.

In 1983, the excellent late summer produced an abundance of visitors to the study light. Northern Spinach (*Lygris populata* L.)

was unexpected as I had assumed it to occur on hills or old woodland, not the Vale of York. Clouded Yellows (*Coleus croceus* Geoff.) were seen in Wharfedale where it was good to find larvae of Coronet (*Craniophora ligustri* D. & S.) on ash and find both Heath Rivulet (*Perizoma minorata* Tr.) and Barred Carpet (*Perizoma taeniata* Steph.) not uncommon locally, though again the Grey Mountain Carpet (*Entephria caesiata* D.& S.) was hardly expected by a river in a valley bottom.

Larvae of Fox (*Macrothylacia rubi* L.) and Ruby Tiger (*Phragmatobia fuliginosa* L.) (northern form) were fairly common in early summer. It was good to see Dotted Rustic (*Rhyacia simulans* Hufn.) at buddleia in York and Plain Clay (*Amathes depuncta* L.) at sugar in Wensleydale. As I did very little in 1983 these observations bode well for the future. – M. R. BRITTON, 67 Bramley Garth, Appletree Village, York, Y03 0NQ.

MELANIC IDEA BISELATA HUFN.: SMALL FAN-FOOTED WAVE. – Several melanic *I. biselata* were again taken in 1982 – an average of three or four have been noted annually – from our Ewingswode trap in the Monkswood NNR (Site No. 277, O.S.GR.TL200 797). run by Mr. J. N. Greatorex-Davies. These aberrations vary in shade from suffused smokey grey over the entire wings to very dark grey with submarginal bands of the normal ground colour. – A. M. RILEY, Entomology Department, Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Hertfordshire. [Mr. Riley has sent us a good coloured photo of four of his *biselata:* (1) normal; (2) ab. *fimbriata* Steph.; (3) & (4) melanic ab., Monks Wood, 12 & 27.7.1980. Reference to the RCK collection in BMNH shows the latter two are referable to ab. *griseata* Preissecker, of which there are eight examples in that coll. five of which are localised as from: Pallaskenry, Limerick, 1977; Monks Wood, Hunts, 1976; Polegate, Sussex, 1924; Bentley, Suffolk, 1897; Watergate, Hants, 1898. – J.M.C.-H.]

CALOPTERYX SPLENDENS (HARRIS) (ODONATA: CALOPTERYGIDAE) RECORDED IN CENTRAL LONDON. – I previously reported the sighting of a male *Calopteryx virgo* (L.) in central London (*Ent. Rec.* **94**: 246). The second British member of this genus can now be recorded from the capital: A dead male of *C. splendens* was found on the pavement of West Halkin Street, SW1, (TQ 282794), on the morning of 30th July 1984, having presumably been hit by a vehicle. A nearby breeding site would seem somewhat remote, however, the outflow of the Serpentine Lake in Hyde Park was investigated later that day; no other examples were seen. It would seem likely, therefore, that this specimen was a casual vagrant. The occurrance of both British members of this genus in central London, suggests that, the males at least, wander some distance from their breeding sites. – A. P. FOSTER, c/o The Nature Conservancy Council, 19/20 Belgrave Square, London, SW1 8PY.